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## IN MEMORIAM DR. ALBERT V. CASEY

JOHN ATTANASIO\*

IN HIS TREMENDOUSLY diverse career, Al Casey served as CEO, public servant, and professor. As a public official, he led the Resolution Trust Corporation and the U.S. Postal Service; most recently, he was appointed by President George W. Bush to the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors. As a CEO, he led such diverse companies as Times Mirror and American Airlines. What is remarkable about Al, however, is not so much the positions of great responsibility that he occupied as what he accomplished in each of those positions. For example, his leadership of the Resolution Trust Corporation, set up by Congress in 1989, helped to save the U.S. banking system through the liquidation of the assets of failed savings and loan associations.

Al served as CEO of American Airlines for 11 years and remained on the board for another six years. During his tenure as CEO, he led American through the early days of deregulation, and brought it from New York City to the Metroplex in 1979. As an academic at SMU, Al taught in the Cox School of Business, and organized several extremely important conferences here at the Dedman School of Law. All three of these conferences were provoked by the tragic events of September 11, which centrally involved Al's beloved American Airlines. Two of these three conferences were sponsored by the *Journal of Air Law and Commerce* and the other was sponsored by the *International Lawyer*, which is published at the Dedman School of Law for the ABA Section on International Law and Practice.

Shortly after the attack which involved three American Airlines planes, the then editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Air Law and Commerce* and I discussed the possibility of sponsoring a major conference on airline security. We agreed that Al Casey and John Nance, a graduate of this law school who is an aviation

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editor for ABC News, would be ideal organizers of such a conference. Al readily agreed to help organize the conference, and it occurred six weeks after September 11. Al himself spoke, as did his successor Bob Crandall—among many other notables. The conference was reported by a number of press sources, including the *New York Times*. As a follow-up to the conference, Al was instrumental in organizing another important conference on the second anniversary of September 11. This one featured John Nance, former U.S. Transportation Secretary William Coleman, and another of Al's successors, Don Carty. This conference was also widely reported in the press, including the *USA Today*. The third conference that we organized together discussed the adverse effects of terrorism on globalization. Al also delivered one of the keynote addresses at this conference.

I came to know Al well through our many breakfasts together. Some involved planning these conferences, but most were strictly social occasions. Al was always cheerful, humorous, and self-deprecating. He was always in a wonderful mood even when he was suffering one of the many illnesses that beset him in his later years. He was friendly and affable towards all whom he encountered. He had a wide range of friends and was very close to his family.

Al also very much loved students and had great affection for SMU. In fact, I first met Al at a fund-raising meeting at SMU. Al was on SMU's Capital Campaign Committee in charge of international fund-raising. Shortly thereafter, I first observed him behind a microphone. He certainly could have had a career in stand-up comedy.

Among his myriad professions, Al was also a writer. He was especially proud of his 1997 autobiography titled "Casey's Law: If Something Can Go Right It Should." In it he said, "There are no easy cut and dried formulas for business success, but dealing with people has to rank among the most important." Al always advocated a strong sense of personal and business ethics.

At his presentation at the conference shortly after September 11, Al said, "The airline industry is one of a kind." Al Casey was certainly one of a kind. Few people accomplish as much in their lives as Al Casey did in his. It is a privilege to have worked with him and to call him a friend.

# Articles

